

YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report synthesises recent research on youth engagement policies and programmes in India. The British Council India earlier commissioned a study on Youth Leadership and Global Citizenship Initiatives (YLGCI), which drew on the knowledge and experience of organisations offering programmes for young people. What was missing was the perspective of young people themselves, so the Council commissioned an online campaign and a series of focus groups and telephone interviews to garner the more subjective experience of young Indians. This report brings together these perspectives and the findings of the YLGCI study, along with a brief consideration of comparable issues in the UK and Europe (see references).

The recommendations below are based on analysis of the research focusing on eight key topic areas, but most are relevant to more than just one (see the Recommendations section at the end of this executive summary).

KEY TOPIC AREAS:

1. Youth engagement – motivations and aspirations
2. The National Youth Policy and related government programmes
3. Local initiatives and extra-curricular activities
4. Volunteering
5. Methods and platforms to engage youth
6. Youth leadership
7. Social enterprise
8. Communications and social media

Two common themes that emerged in discussion of all eight topics were:

THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

Education is regarded as essential not only for the career opportunities of the relatively privileged young people taking part in the discussions, but for all Indians. Participants felt strongly that it needs to be both more widely available and of a higher quality, and they expressed a particular willingness to contribute by volunteering in educational programmes.

THE NEED TO GIVE YOUNG PEOPLE MORE FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

Participants were frustrated by the reluctance of older people to take them seriously as adults and potential leaders and to give them a chance to take real responsibility. This encompasses the freedom to choose their own college courses and career paths and the opportunity to have a say in shaping young engagement programmes, or indeed initiating programmes of their own. The possibility is emerging of a paradigm shift from seeing young people as charges to be managed to acknowledging them as masters of their own destinies and potentially that of the nation itself.

“ Before we look at what young people can do for others, we must make sure they are educated themselves – FGD participant ”



KEY TOPIC AREAS

Provide better information about policies and programmes across various platforms

Focus group participants were unanimous in saying there is insufficient information about engagement programmes, and very few people know about the National Youth Policy.

Programmes need to be better advertised and motivated in a range of platforms to ensure the widest reach.

Relevant to topics: Communications and social media / National Youth Policy and related government programmes

Government should collaborate with and enable NGOs and corporates to lead programmes

Given that many NGOs and corporate entities already involved in engaging young people, the government could work with them to pool resources and learn from their experience. There is particular scope to encourage more corporates to enter the field, providing funds and expertise.

Relevant to topics: Methods and platforms to engage youth / Local initiatives and extra-curricular activities / National Youth Policy and related government programmes

Form partnerships with established media with reach across India

While social media can be very effective tools for engagement, established newspapers, TV and radio stations retain a very wide reach and enjoy a prestige that can lend weight to programmes. National broadcasters and media groups could make especially helpful partners.

Relevant to topics: Methods and platforms to engage youth / Communications and social media

Special programmes should target older youth in workplaces etc

Those who participate in programmes like the NSS and NCC at college age often find them rewarding,

but there is no formal equivalent when people move on to the world of work. Given the greater experience and skills they have, while retaining youthful enthusiasm, they could be a valuable untapped resource for social service programmes, with obvious potential to involve their employers too.

Relevant to topics: Social enterprise / Youth leadership / Methods and platforms to engage youth / Volunteering

Develop a road map for social enterprises

By its nature, social enterprise is uncertain and involves risks, but social entrepreneurs often benefit immensely by learning from the experience of others and from the guidance of mentors. A road map setting out some of the opportunities, pitfalls and potential paths could embolden would-be social entrepreneurs and give them the tools to make the first steps.

Relevant to topics: Social enterprise

Focus on hands-on projects with palpable results, especially in education

The focus group participants with the most rewarding experiences of social service were those who had a clear sense of how their efforts had benefitted others, especially where they had been in regular contact with the beneficiaries. And work involving education of underprivileged children had a special resonance. Focusing on such projects would benefit both the children being taught and the volunteers themselves.

Relevant to topics: Youth engagement – motivations and aspirations / National Youth Policy and related government programmes / Local initiatives and extra-curricular activities / Volunteering

Consider third-party accreditation of programmes

One aspect of the UK experience that may be worth duplicating is the accreditation of voluntary

programmes in the same way educational courses are accredited. Provided the accrediting agency is competent and trustworthy, this both ensures the quality of programmes and reassures volunteers and their families.

Relevant to topics: National Youth Policy and related government programmes / Local initiatives and extra-curricular activities / Volunteering

Experiment with new platforms to encourage volunteering, especially online

There are many lessons to be learned from the experience of social programmes in India to date, but as the field still has massive potential for growth, and platforms are evolving along with technology, there is room for much more experimentation. New ideas might succeed or fail, but if assessed carefully, such experiments can add greatly to the pool of knowledge and expertise in the field.

Relevant to topics: Methods and platforms to engage youth / Volunteering / Communications and social media

Expect more of young people and push them to take real responsibility

There is a palpable frustration among young Indians that they are too often not taken seriously by their elders, and especially by those in authority. While it might be true that young people lack experience and make mistakes, low expectations can be self-fulfilling. By expecting more and allowing them to take risks, society can help young people develop as leaders and reap the benefits.

Relevant to topics: Youth engagement – motivations and aspirations / Youth leadership

Cultivate parents and family as partners rather than seeing them as barriers

The conservatism of Indian parents is often seen as a major barrier to young people engaging in

extra-curricular activities, getting involved in social programmes and indeed following their true career ambitions. But parents want what is best for their children, and if persuaded that engaging in social service, social enterprise, etc is a viable and worthwhile pursuit, they could be invaluable allies in developing programmes and recruiting young people.

Relevant to topics: Youth engagement – motivations and aspirations / Methods and platforms to engage youth

Consider developing a comprehensive careers service for young people

It is striking that few participants in the focus groups had clear career paths ahead of them, even those studying for vocational degrees. And despite the widely-noted emphasis in India on engineering as a career, an engineering qualification is no guarantee of a degree. There is a clear need for better guidance so that young people understand the careers landscape and can make informed choices – even if it is to keep their options open or take risks.

Relevant to topics: Youth engagement – motivations and aspirations

Focus on motivation as much as incentives

Much is made of the importance of incentives for young people to get involved in social programmes, and it is no doubt important to consider these. But the most effective incentives are those in tune with people's motivations - eg, seeing the success of educational initiatives is the best reward for altruistic volunteers, while the acquisition of relevant skills suits those who join for career reasons. Understanding motivation is the key to designing incentives.

Relevant to topics: Youth engagement – motivations and aspirations / Local initiatives and extra-curricular activities / Volunteering / Youth leadership

Engaging Young Indians

Introduction: harnessing enthusiasm and unleashing potential

Youth engagement is an established field in India, with government and non-government organisations involved to a greater or lesser degree in providing programmes that encourage young people to engage with social issues. These programmes involve large numbers of young people and undoubtedly achieve much both for their participants and other beneficiaries.

Nonetheless, there are a number of problems and limitations with the current youth engagement environment – and a number of opportunities and possibilities to improve it.

Many of these problems and potential solutions have already been discussed in existing literature based on discussions with the organisations involved. This report synthesises the findings of a study commissioned by the British Council, Youth Leadership and Global Citizenship Initiatives (YLGCI), with the subjective experience of young people themselves gleaned through a number of focus group and other discussions (see references).

The purpose of the report is to identify and explore solutions for priority areas of concern for youth, to review key policies and programmes for youth in India and make comparisons with the situation in the UK, to identify on-going and potential partnership and sponsorship opportunities for developing new UK-India links and to identify and recommend potential channels for reaching youth effectively and with maximum effectiveness.

The focus of the report is on eight key topics.

1. Youth engagement – motivations and aspirations
2. The National Youth Policy and related government programmes
3. Local initiatives and extra-curricular activities
4. Volunteering
5. Methods and platforms to engage youth
6. Youth leadership
7. Social enterprise
8. Communications and social media

For each topic, a short summary of the existing research on key policies and programmes is followed by brief insights from the experience in the UK, before a more comprehensive summary of the relevant points raised in discussions with young Indians. The resulting recommendations - which conclude the report - are not organised by topic, as many of them overlap, but each is followed by a note of the topics to which it is relevant.

Additional points and observations: liberating India's brilliant minds

Beyond the topics above, and despite the fact that participants were never directly asked about it, a great emphasis was placed in all focus group discussions on the need for better education, especially at the primary level. In the words of one Chennai law student, 'Before we look at what young people can do for others, we must make sure they are educated themselves'.

As English-speaking Indians, most participants inevitably came from relatively privileged backgrounds, but they were very conscious of the fact that most young Indians are less fortunate, and they felt strongly that education should not only be available to all, but also of a much higher quality. Another student in Chennai argued that in addition to educating the illiterate, there should be extra help to 'add value' for those already receiving a basic education, so they can aspire to a career rather than just a job. A respondent in Delhi echoed this in calling for more attention to be paid to those already in education but not 'high achievers'.

Significantly, many participants reported that their most rewarding experiences of volunteering had been in the field of education, especially of underprivileged children in slums and villages. Another Delhi participant spoke about how programmes like the National Cadet Corps could help bridge the gap between the 'two Indias'; urban and rural, rich and poor. Education was seen as crucial to the development of the latter, and the means by which educated young Indians

could perhaps best help their less privileged peers.

As well as the longer-term benefits of education, there could be more immediate practical benefits arising from such initiatives. A college professor taking part in one of the Delhi focus groups said the majority of government funds available for social projects are unclaimed, as those who need them often lack the knowledge and skills to apply for them. Better educated volunteers engaging with those in need could be well-placed to help.

Nevertheless, there are also concerns about the type of education available even to more privileged young Indians, as discussed in the section below on 'Youth engagement – motivations and aspirations'. In particular, participants felt there is too much emphasis on exams, too little time for extra-curricular activities and an undue emphasis on career-oriented subjects like engineering.

Dr Jamir, an assistant professor taking part in one of the Delhi focus groups, argued there should be a greater focus on ethics in education. Technical skills and knowledge should be informed by a moral framework that emphasises the importance of social responsibility. She noted that the IITs and IIMs attract and shape 'brilliant minds', but said more had to be done to ensure these brilliant minds served India as a whole rather than just making profits for corporations. This theme was taken up by another professor present, Dr Ravindra

This point highlights an interesting tension at the heart of any discussion about youth engagement and how to foster it. Considered from one perspective, the tension is between self-interested careerism and altruistic social service. The former tends to be seen as individualistic and materialistic, while the latter is patriotic and self-sacrificing. But the focus group discussions suggest another way to look at this tension. Many young Indians express a personal desire to engage in social issues and broaden their own horizons, while it is social and familial pressure that drives them to focus narrowly on their careers instead.

In this sense, paradoxically, it is volunteering to help others that is self-motivated or

'individualistic', while playing safe by devoting oneself to one's career is conformist and involves real 'self-sacrifice'. Indeed, another possible tension that emerged from the discussions and is discussed in this report was that between the benefits of voluntary programmes for the third party beneficiaries and that for the volunteers themselves. This question must be an important consideration when assessing the success of such programmes, but the deeper point is that young Indians passionately want to work for the betterment of their country, and get a lot out of the process in their own terms, both in terms of personal satisfaction and indeed contacts, skills and experience.

In this sense, the challenge of youth engagement is not to coerce selfish and apathetic young people into doing their duty for society. On the contrary, it is to give them the confidence and backing to pursue their own dreams and passions; to harness the enthusiasm of young people for the benefit of wider society, rather than resigning them to the fate of 'selling their souls' for no more than personal material gain.

Of course, this does not mean there is anything in principle wrong with working for profit-seeking corporations – the private sector has done much to improve life for millions of Indians in recent decades. Indeed, another key idea to emerge from discussions was the need to involve corporates in social programmes and take advantage of their reach and expertise as well as material resources. The old-fashioned moral dichotomy between the private and public sectors is perhaps as redundant as that between altruism and individualism – a point especially clear in the burgeoning field of social enterprise (see section below).

All in all, it seems there is a new agenda emerging among young Indians, with a greater emphasis not only on social service and political engagement, but also on individuality and creativity. A good illustration of this is *Revolution 2020*, a 2011 novel by Chetan Bhagat - who is extremely popular among the demographic consulted for this report. The novel captures a generation's frustration with exam-focused, careers-based education, as well as with political corruption. But it also speaks to

an optimism among young Indians, and a belief that real change is possible, despite the pessimism of their parents and grandparents. Naturally, idealism alone is insufficient to effect change, but it is an unmistakable 'resource' to be tapped. The most important conclusion to be drawn from the discussions is perhaps that the greatest potential for youth engagement programmes in India lies at the point where personal passions and ambitions meet national aspirations for development and transformation.

1. YOUTH ENGAGEMENT – MOTIVATIONS AND ASPIRATIONS

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH ON KEY POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES IN INDIA

A key finding of the Youth Leadership and Global Citizenship Initiatives study (YLGCI) is that 'organisations need to develop programmes that balance needs of youth on aspects of functional utility while responding to their continually evolving areas of interest'. In other words, there is a balance to be struck between the clear benefits of participation and those aspects that actually excite and inspire young people to take part.

The factors contributing to utility include:

- tangible outcomes,
- perceived employability,
- the acquisition of market-relevant skills,
- practical exposure to new experiences, people and potential employers,
- better linkages between schools, colleges, NGOs, the private sector etc
- and support for participation from both family and peers.

The factors contributing to interest include:

- appealing to young people's own aspirations,
- social agendas relevant to their particular circumstances,
- ease of access and ease of participation,
- affordability,
- dynamic and evolving programme content
- and a perception that getting involved is a 'cool' thing to do.

A further distinction might be made between the

'extrinsic' benefits of programmes that involve development, charitable or environmental work and the 'intrinsic' benefits of the same programmes or others that are solely for the good of the participants themselves. In the latter case in particular it is desirable to involve young people in the design of programmes and to have them set their own goals as recommended in the YLGCI report.

COMPARABLE ISSUES IN THE UK AND EUROPE

The recent development in the UK that is most relevant to the above concerns not social service programmes but careers advice, since here too there is a balance to be struck between what might be seen as objectively beneficial and what actually appeals to young people.

In 2011 a UK youth summit was convened for young people to engage them in the development of the existing careers service, which the government wants to extend to all young people from 14 to 18 rather than 16 as before. Young people were also involved in the design of a government supported campaign and website that brings all careers information and opportunities for young people into one place. Industry partners have also been involved in this enterprise.

According to the study, Workplace of the future: a view from European youth, many young Europeans feel conventional education does not properly equip them for the emerging 'digital enterprise' economy.

SUMMARY OF YOUTH MATTERS FINDINGS

Youth Matters asked young people how they feel about the prospect of pursuing their extra-curricular passions not as a hobby but as a career. Respondents cited financial stability issues and peer and family pressure as the main obstacles to taking the risk of pursuing an unconventional career. The education system is also blamed because of its tendency to put all students into 'the same mould', regardless of their innate talents and interests. Nonetheless, some respondents did feel that with the right focus and dedication,

individuals are capable of overcoming these obstacles.

SUMMARY OF FOCUS GROUP AND TELEPHONE DISCUSSIONS

There is a widespread perception that young Indians face strong pressure to opt for safe and stable careers in fields like engineering, and that the burden of academic work often means other activities and aspirations have to be abandoned.

In Chennai, two young women explained that they really wanted to be journalists, but their parents had encouraged them to study law instead, citing concerns about safety as well as perception about what is a 'proper' profession. In Kolkata, participants said there is an excessive focus on careers in engineering and similar professions, and that teachers are reluctant to help those interested in other career paths.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to assume all young Indians are frustrated artists, coerced into engineering by their parents. One blogger from Mumbai was adamant that his writing was an amateur activity and not something he was interested in pursuing as a career. Another respondent in Pune was studying law not just as a career path, but because she aspires to work in environmental law and fight for conservation. She felt the best way to do this is not through voluntary campaigns or NGOs, but by 'getting into the system' and using government to effect change. A respondent in Delhi had worked for five years in the private sector after graduating, before getting involved in a heritage project. She was undoubtedly in a stronger position to engage meaningfully in the issue with the experience she had gained – suggesting it may not be necessary to choose between 'career' and 'passion' at an early age.

A participant in Delhi said 'Indian parents don't know when to stop parenting'. Another, in Mumbai, suggested young people lack a sense of independence, saying that only in Italy and India do people stay with their parents after the age of 18. It was also noted that for women in particular the expectation of marriage is a major factor in planning career.

Participants indicated that both self-interest (CV-building etc) and concern about the issues motivate young people to get involved in social issues. They said it is important that initiatives are not be boring, but appeal to students in their own terms as well as those of national duty. As one Chennai respondent argued, 'You can't live only to serve. You have to live your own life and serve society'. Participants also expressed a distaste for politics. Causes were preferred to systematic politics, and city-level issues to national ones.

Several respondents complained the older generations are very pessimistic about social initiatives, insisting they have 'seen it all before' and often describing them as a waste of time. There is also a 'fear of failure', which means parents are reluctant to encourage their children to take part in programmes where the outcome is uncertain.

Another major barrier that came up in the Delhi focus groups was a perception among older adults that young people are not mature or stable enough to make decisions. In the words of one participant in Delhi, 'young people are discouraged because of the stamp of inexperience'. It is thus considered important that young people are given the opportunity to develop experience by taking initiatives.

Participants noted that those going into the social sector must value knowledge and service more than money, but the discussions indicate that there are many young people who do just that, but would also appreciate greater cultural affirmation of their efforts.

RELEVANT RECOMMENDATIONS

Focus on hands-on projects with palpable results, especially in education

Expect more of young people and push them to take real responsibility

Cultivate parents and family as partners rather than seeing them as barriers

Consider developing a comprehensive careers service for young people

Focus on motivation as much as incentives
(See Recommendations section for more detail.)

2. NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY AND RELATED GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH ON KEY POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES IN INDIA

The Draft National Youth Policy 2012 proposes a sustained programme of education and training and appropriate support services to achieve a number of goals. These include:

- strengthening the culture of patriotism and responsible citizenship among young people,
- instilling a sense of national unity and cohesion,
- recognising and respecting diversity
- and developing an international perspective.

The policy aims to foster an abiding commitment and adherence to the values enshrined in the Indian Constitution and to develop young people as key promoters of these values. It is also intended to help young people become economically self-reliant and productive, either by taking up employment or by setting up their own business enterprises, and to become active partners in promoting sustainable development.

Another goal is to give all sections of youth access to basic nutrition and health especially related to reproductive and sexual health information and mental health services. The policy also seeks to nurture a spirit of volunteerism, and encouraging the voluntary sector to create appropriate platforms to promote recruit and train youth.

The YLGCI study found the policy was seen by stakeholders as a significant improvement over the previous Youth Policy (2003), though it is deemed overly ambitious in terms of implementation. Respondents felt the policy would put too much of a burden on existing infrastructure and resources, and that greater budgetary allocations were needed. Some said it would be useful to learn from experiences of Sri Lanka or Caribbean countries, where there is significant participation of youth in public policy and governance.

The study also found a lack of awareness of the National Youth Policy among relevant constituencies.

- NGO staff working with youth and those in

government-related institutions had some degree of awareness.

- There was low awareness among corporate entities and international organisations.

Meanwhile, some respondents who had read the Youth Policy some felt its language was directive and 'mandated youth' to become 'active citizens' rather than offering motivation and support for young people to take decisions of their own.

Comparable issues in the UK

'Positive for Youth', a cross-government policy for 13-19 year olds, was launched by the government in 2011 following a 'youth summit' and extensive consultation with stakeholders. Its key features, according to the document itself, are:

- “It is positive about young people.
- It is centred on young people.
- It respects young people’s right to have their voice heard.
- It seeks to support parents and carers, not ignore or supplant them.
- It is based on genuine partnership rather than state control and silo working.
- It empowers and supports local leadership.
- It has been developed through a collaborative process.”

In practical terms, it entails:

- “empowering young people by enabling them to inspect and report on local youth services and to help ‘youth proof’ government policy
- funding national helpline and website services to support and provide advice to parents of teenagers; funding improved brokerage between businesses and projects for young people
- completing a programme of youth centres to act as hubs for a wide range of services in disadvantaged areas
- piloting National Citizen Service which brings together 16 year olds from all backgrounds for a demanding personal and social development experience and opportunity for social action in their communities
- funding directly 18 voluntary sector programmes of national significance which aim to transform the lives of young people to generate lessons for the future

- funding a small number of youth innovation zones to test radical new system-wide approaches to involving all local partners in supporting young people
- and publishing annually a new set of national measures to demonstrate progress in improving outcomes for young people."

In July 2013, the government published a progress report and moved responsibility for youth strategy and policy from the Department for Education to the Cabinet Office to be led by the Minister for Civil Society. The Cabinet Office's new responsibilities will include a statutory duty on local authorities for youth provision in their areas and strategic dialogue with young people and youth sector organisations on youth policy.

Another significant body is the British Youth Council, a charity funded by the Department for Education. It runs a number of youth-led networks and programmes including the UK Youth Parliament, Young Mayor Network, Local Youth Council Network, National Scrutiny Group and Youth Select Committee.

Summary of Youth Matters findings

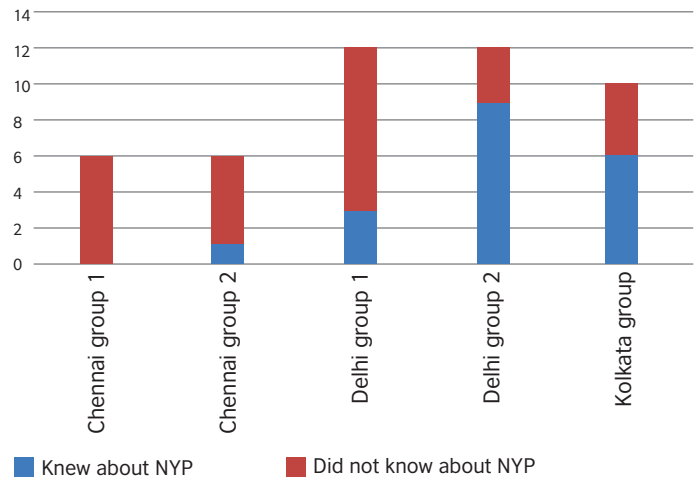
Nearly 70% of the 458 young people polled had never heard of the National Youth Policy (NYP). While they partly blamed the government for an 'incoherent, obscure awareness programme', they also admitted they were not proactive enough in finding out about such policies. In general, they felt young people are not always interested in taking the initiative necessary to effect change.

Summary of focus group and telephone discussions

Most participants in the focus groups had not heard of India's National Youth Policy.

(The Delhi and Kolkata groups included several people professionally involved in youth engagement.)

In contrast to the NYP, nearly all new about the National Service Scheme (NSS) and National Cadet Corps (NCC), and most had either participated in one or other or had friends or relatives who had done so. In some colleges, NSS is compulsory in



the first year or for a set number of hours, and in some, students are given additional credits for volunteering. It was suggested that the demands of school work are a significant barrier to further participation.

In Kolkata, the participants had more knowledge of the NSS than NCC, and the impression was that it is a good experience, but perhaps too fleeting. Participants also suggested the benefits for society at large, as well as for the students themselves should be more clearly articulated. This is especially important because many parents consider them a waste of time.

In the second Chennai group, three students related their mixed experiences of NSS.

1. A young man was sent to teach maths in a rural village, only to find the children were substantially behind the level he had been asked to teach.
2. A young woman volunteered to help spastic children, but the rota system meant she only saw the children once every several weeks, and could not build relationships with them.
3. Another young woman helped produce educational materials for less privileged children and felt the advantage was that these resources could be reused rather than going to waste.

The fact that participants are often unable to see the results of NSS initiatives was regarded as a significant disincentive to get involved.

One participant in Chennai went as far as to say that NSS programmes are 'mostly unsuccessful'. It was suggested that NSS could learn from other more successful programmes like IIT Madras'

RuTAG project (part of IViL, IIT for Villages), which provides technology for villages.

One participant in Delhi described the NSS and NCC as a bridge between 'the two Indias', taking urban youth into villages to meet and work with their rural peers. He described the experience as 'deeply satisfying'. Another participant described her experience of teaching slum children as 'both heart-rending and exciting'. She had been shocked to find some of the children did not know how to use the toilet or that they should wash their hands afterwards, and that their education amounted to little more than rote learning of lines they did not understand. But the experience of teaching them was sufficiently rewarding that she continued to volunteer after the 120 hours compulsory at her college.

Another participant in Delhi had studied at a technical college where NSS is not compulsory, but she reported many students joined in their second year, once settled into college life. Another respondent said the value of the NCC was in encouraging team work. She said that young Indians are good at studying and many can work alone for 14-15 hours, but that they often struggle to collaborate with others.

One issue raised at the first Delhi focus group was that NSS and NCC target college students, and there is no equivalent for older young people into their later twenties. The consensus was that NSS and NCC alumni had a wealth of experience which could be exploited, and that they would be well placed to take a lead in any programmes in workplaces, for example.

RELEVANT RECOMMENDATIONS

Provide better information about policies and programmes across various platforms

Focus on hands-on projects with palpable results, especially in education

Consider third-party accreditation of programmes

(See Recommendations section for more detail.)

3. LOCAL INITIATIVES AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

Summary of research on key policies and programmes in India

The YLGCI report includes detailed information on numerous initiatives including the following.

Some initiatives from British or other international institutions

The Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) offers technical support on youth engagement to member countries; and participation in advocacy and development of youth policies.

The International Award for Young People is a global organisation to recognise and develop youth leadership with the overall mandate of youth development. Commencing in 1956 as The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, the award is currently active in 44 countries.

UnLtd is a UK-based organisation dedicated to helping individuals reach their potential and to promoting social enterprise.

Restless Development (India) is a UK-based organisation working in nine countries including India. With a focus on sexual and reproductive health rights for youth, the organisation has engaged further in livelihood, employment and civic participation.

Initiatives from the Indian government and related institutions

The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) was launched in October 2009 with a mandate to skill 150 million people by 2022 in 20 focus sectors identified by the government and the informal segment through a three-pronged approach revolving around creating, funding and enabling sustainable skills training initiatives.

The Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD) is an Institute of National Importance by the Act of Parliament No.35/2012. RGNIYD functions as vital resource centre coordinating training, orientation, research, extension and outreach initiatives for State,



You can't live only to serve. You have to live your own life and serve society as well. – FGD participant



Central Governments and National Level youth organisations.

Initiatives from the corporate sector

The TATA group has been part of Jagriti Yatra where the youth are provided country-wide exposure visits.

PRS Legislative Research was started in 2010 and it primarily provides research support to legislators. The organisation brings together young people from various academic and professional backgrounds to be able to contribute their skills to the goal of making the parliament better informed, more transparent and participatory.

The Great Indian Dream Foundation supported by IIPM-Planman Group works across seven states of the country. One of its core mandates is to providing skill training to the youth in the age group of 18-35 years who belong to households in Below Poverty Line (BPL) category.

Nokia's Create to Inspire Fellowships is a programme launched in collaboration with Oxfam. It engages youth to understand the environment better and make better choices. The key focus is on sustainable development and responsible consumption.

Initiatives from NGOs

The Inter Cultural Dialogue and Exchange (ICDE) – India promotes intercultural learning and global education through internships and international voluntary work by the way of exchange programmes.

Music Basti aims to create engagement with artists and works with disadvantaged children. It tries to bring young people from different education and economic backgrounds together to form lasting relationships.

The Youth Parliament Foundation (YYPF) supports and enables young people to create programmes and influence policies in the areas of gender, sexuality, health, education, the arts and governance.

Teach For India was created by a group of young

leaders working to develop an innovative solution to address educational inequity in the country.

Comparable issues in the UK

The most significant recent UK government initiative to support out of school and extra-curricular activities is the National Citizen Service (NCS). Disengaged young people are also being provided with mentoring and other support through the £1.9m 'military ethos' programme, and there has been new investment in the establishment of Cadets Units. There is also a wealth of opportunities for young people to participate in activities organised by NGOs, charities and specialist youth organisations.

At the risk of generalisation, there is a significant cultural difference between the UK and India in that British young people are under less family pressure than their middle class Indian peers to excel academically. Education is considered very important, but parents also like their children to take part in extra-curricular activities, and these are also valued by universities when it comes to admissions. There are few barriers preventing young people from engaging with local civil society initiatives if they are inclined to do so.

Summary of Youth Matters findings

Over 150 young Indians took part in a discussion about how seriously extra-curricular activities are taken, as compared to academics. Youth Matters reported that, 'both students and teachers agreed that marks are all that seem to matter at the end of the day. The child could be interested in sports, debates or handicraft, but he would be judged only by how much he manages to score in his exams'. Students who miss classes to take part in sport or other activities are accused of wasting their time. Moreover, to the extent that sport is encouraged, it is with a highly competitive spirit, rather for its character-building aspects. Several respondents had positive experiences to share, but felt the majority of young people faced too much pressure to pass exams, get into good colleges and generally make productive use of their time.

The National Cadet Corps and National Service Scheme help bridge the gap between the “two Indias” – FGD participant

Summary of focus groups and telephone discussions

In the focus groups, several participants called for a widening of the curriculum beyond the traditional focus on engineering, law and medicine. In Delhi, one participant argued for a rethink of what education is for. He said that too many parents see it as a route to a good salary, but instead the focus should be on gaining the skills needed to contribute to society.

Nonetheless, most participants had some positive experience of extra-curricular activities, including volunteering with the Youth Red Cross, the Blue Cross and Legal Aid Committees. One young woman in Mumbai described a college-based programme through which students mentor economically backward young people, with a focus on raising their horizons. She gave the example of a girl from a slum who aspired to become an air hostess, and said the opportunity to help someone like that to realise her dream was inspiring to all involved. In Delhi, participants mentioned a college peer-group initiative to teach the children of labourers, as well as a drugs education project organised through gurdwaras in Punjab.

One barrier to youth initiatives that arose is red tape, especially for NGOs or others who want to work with schools. Similarly, an artist and social entrepreneur in one of the Chennai discussions described the difficulties he had faced when organising volunteers to make a 100-foot mural on Marina Beach to mark World Child Labour Day. The authorities had required large amounts of paperwork to arrange security when this could easily have been organised by the event's corporate sponsors. Other participants agreed that the authorities could make it easier for people to take initiatives by adopting a more commonsense approach to bureaucracy.

RELEVANT RECOMMENDATIONS

Government should collaborate with and enable NGOs and corporates to lead programmes

Focus on hands-on projects with palpable results, especially in education

Consider third-party accreditation of programmes

Focus on motivation as much as incentives
(See Recommendations section for more detail.)

4. VOLUNTEERING

Summary of research on key policies and programmes in India

The YLGCI report identifies a number of challenges relating to youth volunteerism in India. One is that there is no clear framework in the National Youth Policy for how to encourage young people to volunteer, and no coordination between central and state government. Another is that the current education system does not allow students much time to spend on volunteering. The result is that the only young people who can spend substantial amounts of time volunteering are either unemployed or qualified social workers (and thus not really 'volunteers'). For social and cultural reasons, women are also underrepresented among young volunteers, typically comprising less than a tenth of the programmes looked at for the study. A further problem is pressure from parents to focus on education or skills training that will lead to financial security, rather than volunteering programmes whose benefits for young people are uncertain. For similar reasons, those young people who do volunteer are reluctant to go far from where they live. Meanwhile, increasing regulations pertaining to volunteers from overseas make it difficult to establish long-term international programmes.

All this means that young people are increasingly examining their own motivations and asking what benefits volunteering might bring them, rather than simply putting themselves forward to support good causes.

The YLGCI report found organisations are initiating measures to address these concerns. These include offering stipends or honorariums to volunteers, implementing reward and recognition mechanisms, planning for training of volunteers (who often have little or no prior experience of engaging on social issues) and also developing a longer term perspective for volunteer efforts. The report cites the case of Pravah, which recruits promising volunteers onto its paid staff. Organisations have also encouraged volunteers to

reflect on their own goals as part of programmes, and to play a role in developing new volunteers. These measures help retain the interest and engagement of volunteers over a longer period.

Comparable issues in the UK

The UK government is encouraging volunteering for all age groups, including young people, by providing funding of £4 million over 2011-15 to a national youth volunteering charity known as V:

- to support the development of volunteering and social action for young people aged 16 to 25
- to create opportunities for young people to participate in community activities through Sport England and the Arts Council
- to develop a network of Young Ambassadors of sport across England, including to promote London 2012, increase participation in school sport, promote healthy lifestyles, and support delivery of the School Games, through the Youth Sport Trust
- of over £40 million over 2011-13 to support volunteering, giving and volunteering infrastructure through the Social Action Fund, Innovation in Giving Fund, Challenge Prizes and Local Infrastructure Fund
- and of over £1 million over 2011-13 to support YouthNet which runs the volunteering website www.do-it.org.uk and which will share its data more freely with other organisations.

The UK social enterprise ASDAN (formerly known as the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network), offers accreditation for volunteering programmes. ASDAN suggests that being able to offer an accredited qualification gives a project additional credibility and is a sign of the quality of its programme.

Meanwhile, the most recently published 'Community Life Survey' data, covering August 2012 – January 2013, show increases in overall levels of both formal and informal volunteering compared with the 2010-11 Citizenship Survey figures. As only two quarters worth of data have so far been published, it is not possible yet to look at detailed age breakdowns of this data as the sample sizes are not large enough to provide



Teaching slum children is both heart-rending and exciting
– FGD participant



robust information. However the general picture appears to show that the overall increase in volunteering levels also applies to the majority of age groups, including 16-19 year olds where the levels of formal volunteering at least once a year increased from 2010-11 to 2012-13.

(communitylife.cabinetoffice.gov.uk)

Ceri Dingle, director of the WORLDwrite youth charity, reports that young volunteers generally have strong support from their families and peers, but that red tape is a significant barrier, particularly for those volunteering to work with children under 18, who have to be vetted often several times by the Criminal Records Bureau.

Summary of Youth Matters findings

15 volunteers from top non-profits were asked what motivates them to volunteer. They said the most important factor is a clear understanding of how particular organisations are bringing about change. It was suggested that there is sometimes a communication gap between young people and organisations, and that it is difficult to ascertain what such organisations actually do and what kind of impact they are having. Volunteers also hope to gain useful experience from their time volunteering and to learn lessons. The respondents also said they wanted to be treated with respect and to get credit and appreciation for their work.

Summary of focus group and telephone discussions

An NGO worker in one of the Delhi groups said the challenge was not only attracting volunteers, but also sustaining their involvement by keeping their interest. He said the key thing is offering specific incentives, from the opportunity to enhance one's CV to meeting new people. He summarised this approach as 'not just using youth for development, but also developing the youth'. He said it was important not to limit their involvement to monotonous tasks like mailings. This echoed points made in Chennai, where it was suggested that volunteers should be given a variety of tasks – office work, field work, taking responsibility for organisation and simply having fun.

A particular incentive that came up was the opportunity for networking and establishing useful contacts for the future, something that is especially valued about AISEC programmes that place young people as interns in the corporate sector (AISEC was originally known in French as the Association Internationale des Étudiants en Sciences Économiques et Commerciales). In the not-for-profit sector, volunteering is an established route to getting a job.

Incentives:

- CV-building
- Meeting new people
- Making professional contacts
- Finding a career path

A major barrier to volunteering is the pressure of school or college work, and especially exams. In Delhi, the semester system was raised as a particular problem in this regard.

Another possible barrier mentioned in Delhi is that NGOs and similar organisations are often led by older people who don't fully appreciate the needs and aspirations of the young. One participant in Delhi who had started a project of his own reported that his efforts to involve established NGOs had been ignored. Eventually it was when his project was featured in the Hindustan Times that he began to be taken seriously. And when it comes to government programmes, bureaucracy is a problem, as it can take three or four months to enrol.

One more barrier is location. In one of the Delhi focus groups, an NGO worker noted that many would-be volunteers lived outside Delhi and found it difficult to travel. A related issue is concern about safety, especially for young women. This can be overcome, however, by organising safe pick-ups – one participant in Chennai suggested websites or social media could be used to coordinate this on a larger scale. Another option the same participant had used was establishing new initiatives close to the would-be volunteer, which also has the advantage of giving him or her a special sense of ownership



Young people are discouraged because of the stamp of inexperience. – FGD participant



Barriers:

- Lack of time because of academic work
- Difficulty of being taken seriously
- Excessive bureaucracy
- Need to travel

Participants in Kolkata emphasised the importance of motivation rather than incentives. While someone might volunteer in a college programme in order to gain credit, it is only if they then realise the underlying importance of the programme that it will sustain their interest in the longer term, so this needs to be made as clear as possible. Several young people who had volunteered spoke with great enthusiasm about the satisfaction they got from seeing people change. In the words of the Chennai artist, spending time with disadvantaged children and seeing them develop 'cures inner ills'.

Otherwise, simply having time out from other responsibilities and spending time with other young people is certainly part of the appeal of volunteering. One participant, a postgraduate student who works with the Blue Cross caring for animals, described volunteering as an Indian alternative to the British pub culture.

RELEVANT RECOMMENDATIONS

Government should collaborate with and enable NGOs and corporates to lead programmes

Focus on hands-on projects with palpable results, especially in education

Consider third-party accreditation of programmes

Focus on motivation as much as incentives

(See Recommendations section for more detail.)

5. METHODS AND PLATFORMS TO ENGAGE YOUTH

Summary of research on key policies and programmes in India

There is currently an intellectual as well as generational gulf between young Indians and the leadership of the country's political parties. While the National Youth Policy is intended in part to remedy this situation (see separate section), there are lessons to be learned about how to engage young people in politics and national life more generally from existing programmes engaging them in social service. The YLGCI report highlights a number of these.

- First, that it is necessary to involve young people in various stages of the programme life cycle in order to give them a sense of ownership.
- Ideally, young people should also be able to choose their level of engagement and to set their own goals.
- Incentives are also important, and these include increased employability and international exposure (mixing with overseas volunteers or indeed travelling abroad), as well as the opportunity to have a positive impact on one's own local environment.
- Programmes providing opportunities to learn and apply skills at a workplace or similar environment are particularly valued by young participants.
- Another idea suggested by the YLGCI report is the need for greater engagement with corporate entities. It is reported that there is untapped potential in companies that are interested in engaging with youth development programmes but are currently not doing so or wish to increase their levels of engagement.
- Engagement with corporate entities could be especially useful for programmes involving vocational skills training, which will benefit from the expertise and local and global market knowledge of corporate partners.



The key is not just using youth for development, but also developing the youth. – FGD participant



Comparable issues in the UK

The National Citizen Service (NCS) is of particular interest as a platform because it is very new, having been piloted only in 2011. The NCS is open to all 16 and 17 year olds across England. It is a full-time programme that takes place over three weeks, followed by 30 hours of social action. Taking place outside term time, the voluntary programme is made up of four sections that focus on personal and social development including leadership, teamwork and communication skills. The Cabinet Office and the Department for Education piloted NCS during 2011 and 2012 with the participation of around 30,000 young people in 2012. It is claimed that evidence shows NCS helps to build participants' confidence and communication, teamwork and leadership skills through volunteering work in their local community. In 2013, around 50,000 places are available, rising to around 90,000 in 2014. The National Youth Agency (NYA) and partner O2 Think Big provided an additional £500,000 to give up to 5,000 young people, including 2,500 NCS graduates, the opportunity to start their own social action projects from August 2012 through to September 2013.

WORLDwrite is an education charity with global links, which runs WORLDbytes, the School of Citizen TV. The charity teaches young volunteers how to produce and edit films on various social issues for broadcast online. The acquisition of these skills and the exposure involved are both very attractive to young people, who are then engaged in discussion about the issues in question.

Summary of Youth Matters findings

Youth Matters engaged 25 young people in a discussion about how the government could engage more young people. There was a consensus that there is a problem with political apathy among young Indians, as well as a mismatch between the concerns of privileged and underprivileged youth. Respondents were in favour of political reform to make it easier for

people to enter politics and to curb dynastic rule. The idea of youth wings of parties is also popular, while there is a feeling that politicians should try to speak to young people in young people's own language. There is also an impatience with the pace of political reform in India, and a belief that young people could do things better. It was suggested that a panel of youth representatives could advise the government on making the country more youth-oriented. Educational initiatives and the use of social media to engage young people were also suggested.

Summary of focus group and telephone discussions

There was a recurring emphasis on the importance of education, especially at primary level, since uneducated citizens are much less able to engage meaningfully in national life. A participant in one of the Delhi focus groups talked about programmes to encourage young people, especially girls, to stay at school. These include scholarships and free laptops, bicycles etc. Although they are often politically motivated – enacted by parties seeking re-election – the consensus was that they are a good thing that could be built on further.

It was also argued that this drive for basic education is something that could engage more privileged young people too. Many of the most rewarding programmes discussed involved mobilising educated young people to help their poorer peers. This can be organised at school level or even at home, as one participant had even taught her neighbour to read.

Platforms mentioned in discussions

AISEC, international exchange organisation (www.aiesec.in/)

Manthan, a youth movement aiming to set the agenda for the 2014 general election. (www.indiancag.org/manthan/)

Ashoka Changemakers, 'a global online community that supports everyone's ability to be a changemaker' (www.changemakers.com/)



When you go on Facebook, it's not to engage in politics.
It's for finding out about others' lives. – FGD participant



iVolunteer, a social enterprise that brings volunteers and organisations together (ivolunteer.in/)

Internshala, a leading internship portal started by a team of IIT alumni (blog.internshala.com/)

The Agaram Foundation, 'an organisation working towards helping the under-privileged in attaining their right to knowledge and quality education' (www.agaram.in/)

Make a Difference (www.makeadiff.in)

In terms of organisations, it was noted that bigger NGOs benefit from widespread awareness of their existence and their work. They can use large-scale events like charity walks to enhance their profile and involve people. Nevertheless, places on their programmes and internships with such organisations are competitive and it can be difficult to get involved without good contacts.

Smaller-scale initiatives need to be more creative to attract attention and volunteers. Websites are essential, but college talks are a more direct platform, with the advantages that come from face-to-face contact, and had been used effectively by participants in Delhi. In Kolkata, street theatre was mentioned as a powerful tool for raising awareness and recruiting volunteers. Social media are also important: the Agaram Foundation, based in Chennai, allows young people to volunteer through social media for a weekend's activity rather than requiring a long-term commitment which may be difficult to make. (See Communication for more on social media). At the same time, traditional media should not be neglected. A respondent in Mumbai had been encouraged to take up journalism by a competition in the Times of India, before taking up an internship with Youth ki Awaaz and then starting his own blog dedicated to social issues.

Overall, participants felt that programmes must be grounded in specific circumstances, and cannot easily be transferred from one country or situation to another. Nevertheless, there was enthusiasm for experimenting with different methods and platforms to see what works.

RELEVANT RECOMMENDATIONS

Government should collaborate with and enable NGOs and corporates to lead programmes

Form partnerships with established media with reach across India

Special programmes should target older youth in workplaces etc

Experiment with new platforms to encourage volunteering, especially online

Cultivate parents and family as partners rather than seeing them as barriers

(See Recommendations section for more detail.)

6. YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Summary of research on key policies and programmes in India

The YLGCI study found agreement among those working in the field of youth engagement that, given the right direction and guidance, youth can take up leadership roles. The National Youth Policy of the government of India is seen as a major step towards addressing the aspirations of the youth, including the potential to lead. Although key political and other leadership positions in India are mostly held by much older people, there are more opportunities emerging for young people with the necessary merit and ability.

While some programmes for young people simply engage them in an established development agenda, others seek to involve young people themselves in programme design and the management process. The YLGCI report suggests the latter approach is more likely to retain the interest and heighten the motivation of youth as well as offering the chance to develop leadership skills. Its respondents noted that young people today are more aware and take an interest in working towards social development. They also cited examples of young people in their team who wished to work in the area of social development.



The role of youth leaders is lighting the spark.

– FGD participant

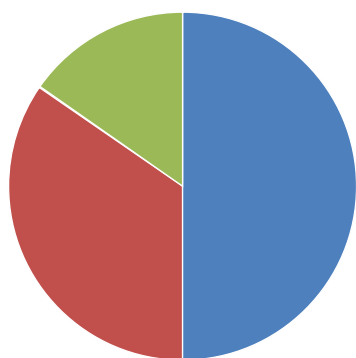


Innovative enterprises that have been started by youth for youth include Music Basti, Happy Hands Foundation, the Youth Parliament Foundation, Youth Ki Awaaz, 'What's Up, Bharat', INDIAFRICA: a Shared Future and Youth Forum on Policy Development. These are run by young people who are deeply concerned about social affairs and wish to assume an active role in shaping the world. These initiatives are working on myriad social aspects, with a few engaged directly at the level of building youth participation in public policy. Initiatives such as INDIAFRICA: A Shared Future from IdeaWorks is one such example.

Comparable issues in the UK and Europe

The UK has a number of traditional organisations committed to fostering leadership among young people, most notably the Scouts and Guides and the Boys' and Girls' Brigades. These organisations organise various activities for children and young people up to the age of 18, encouraging teamwork, achievement and social responsibility. Another significant programme is the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme for young people between 14 and 24, through which they earn medals by taking part in adventurous activities and expeditions, often overseas, to learn teamwork and develop leadership skills. There are also cadet programmes organised by the armed forces, but these are not on the same scale as India's National Cadet Corps. Fostering leadership is also a goal of the new Positive for Youth policy and National Citizen Service scheme.

Workplace of the future: a view from European youth suggests young Europeans prefer a more 'people-oriented' style of leadership, drawing on 'social and cross-cultural intelligence.



■ 'involving time, energy and talent for the benefit of the society'
 ■ 'the opportunity to put ideas into action'
 ■ 'giving the youth decision making power equal to that of an adult'

Summary of Youth Matters findings

620 young people were asked which of three options best described leadership.

Several also put forward ideas of their own, from breaking stereotypes and eliminating corruption to getting out of one's comfort zone and working with ground realities.

Summary of focus group and telephone discussions

Most respondents said they see themselves as leaders or potential leaders. The qualities they felt were important in leaders included patience and the ability to listen, a willingness to voice ideas and to help others, as well as being part of a community and understanding how its members think. During the Chennai discussion, one student described the role of the leader as 'lighting the spark', while another insisted it is just as important for the leader to see through an initiative to the end result. One young woman suggested leaders need to help 'define boundaries' and 'civilise' their fellow youths (like the young people who hang on to the outside of buses in Chennai).

Several participants insisted that young people cannot blame the government for problems in the country, but should take responsibility themselves to change things for the better. As one respondent in Pune put it, 'All is in the hands of the youth', and they must use their optimism and 'wired-up' energy to overcome the pessimism of their elders. Another participant emphasised the need for young people to take a lead in order to reap the 'demographic dividend', and suggested more privileged and educated young people have a particular responsibility to offer practical help as well as inspiration to other young people.

Interestingly, when participants were asked about role models, most of those named were not young at all, and included Independence leaders like Gandhi, Nehru, Ambedkar and Savarkar, as well as more contemporary figures like APJ Abdul Kalam and Kiran Bedi. A keen environmentalist and law student cited environmental lawyer Ritwick Dutta. The youngest individual named was the Tamil lyricist and software engineer Madhan Karky, who is 33. Several respondents cited individuals who are not famous but have served them as personal

role models, including an NCC Lieutenant Colonel and the leader of a river clean-up initiative (an 'awe-inspiring' 25-year-old).

RELEVANT RECOMMENDATIONS

Special programmes should target older youth in workplaces etc

Expect more of young people and push them to take real responsibility

Focus on motivation as much as incentives

(See Recommendations section for more detail.)

7. SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Summary of research on key policies and programmes in India

The YLGCI study found few social enterprises working exclusively in the youth domain, though there are social enterprises that have been initiated by youth or have youth as key stakeholders, especially in sectors such as health. Some programmes have developed models based on in-kind support, including training and linkages to networks that help achieve programme goals. The National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC) is also spawning a new category of social entrepreneurs by encouraging grant independent, sustainable models of skilling enterprises.

The YLGCI report concludes that programmes should explore developing and supporting social entrepreneurs among youth. They should look to foster opportunities for young people with social entrepreneurship initiatives in India and overseas, as the social entrepreneurship format provides the opportunity to develop youth citizenship and leadership, presenting a significant untapped opportunity.

Comparable issues in the UK

Social Enterprise UK was founded in 2002 as the national body for social enterprise, comprising private businesses, charities and public sector organisations. Its founding sponsors are PwC, RBS and O2, and it works with numerous government departments including the Department for Education and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. While not specifically aimed at youth people, it offers advice and support to

anyone seeking to start a social enterprise, and a number of those it supports work in the youth sector.

O2's 'Think Big' programme, in partnership with the National Youth Agency (which champions youth work) and UK Youth (a charity) offers grants to young people launching their own projects. Successful projects can be expanding through 'Think Bigger', and it is hoped that this in turn will lead to the development of social enterprises. Blastbeat, a social enterprise educational programme, leverages young people's interest in music and social media to teach them business skills through organising concerts for their peers. At least 25% of the profits are donated to a local cause or charity, or used to fund the development of the young person's social enterprise or similar initiative.

The YLGCI report also draws attention to UnLtd (unltd.org.uk/), a UK programme that works with a range of innovative organisations with a social agenda. Each investee has a dedicated 'associate' and the organisation provides training support and connects the investee with a network of people to support them. The key elements are innovation, non-financial support and customisation to meet individual needs.

Summary of Youth Matters findings

Participants were asked if there are particular difficulties for women going into social enterprise, and said there are, citing 'social barriers like tradition, custom and patriarchal structures of most communities'. There is also the fact that most women are dependent on men for financial support. On the other hand, participants felt that women are often very good at multi-tasking and able to work hard to achieve their goals despite the odds, and thus should be well-suited to the challenges of social enterprise.

Summary of focus group and telephone discussions

In the focus groups there was widespread recognition of the concept of social enterprise, and a number of participants had experience in the field. Nonetheless there was some confusion about what social enterprise actually means, and how it is distinguished from not-for-profit NGO work or from straightforward private sector

businesses. The list below reflects this loose understanding of the term.

'Social enterprise' examples raised in discussions

Transparent Chennai

(www.transparentchennai.com)

Mirakle Couriers, a national award-winning courier agency that employs low-income deaf adults in Mumbai

(www.miraklecouriers.com)

School-based project collecting aluminium foil from schoolmates to make potash alum (Chennai)

Jayaashree Industries sanitary towels.

An NGO teaching farmers about organic farming in Mararashtra

Mandar Tulankar, the young inventor of the shoe-powered mobile phone charger.

Sakthi Masala, employs mostly women and differently abled persons from the rural areas (Tamil Nadu)

Rural electrification in West Bengal –with both government and public funding

Green plastics company, recycling plastics with zero waste, supported by Jaipur National University

Two students in Chennai had studied social enterprise as part of a development studies course and could name several examples. Nevertheless, few participants there were considering social enterprise as a career path. participants in Kolkata suggested social enterprise is still seen by some young people as something for people with nothing better to do. The one Chennai participant who was active as a social entrepreneur was older and an established artist with extensive experience working with NGOs in rural education as well as profit-making social enterprise through a US greetings card distributor.

The benefit of wide experience was a recurring theme. A respondent in Delhi suggested that people who have been working in a field for a few years are better placed than college students to see opportunities to launch something with a social aspect, and they also have the contacts and

expertise to make it happen. It is a big commitment, and involves taking risks, so is less likely to appeal to 19-20 year-olds, and they are less likely to succeed. In Kolkata too, it was suggested social enterprise is best suited to those with two or three years' experience in the corporate sector and the resulting knowledge of how business works. Practical experience was seen as more useful than a Master's degree.

Differing perceptions of social enterprise

- One young social entrepreneur in Delhi described social enterprise as having the 'cool factor' that is missing from more traditional social service.
- Another respondent in Delhi described it as being in the spirit of Gandhi's khadi movement, and perhaps a more enduring legacy than something like the Anna Hazare movement of 2011.

One respondent in Mumbai planned to go into social enterprise after completing her MBA, but she already had a plan in place to employ people in Delhi and Panipat, Haryana to produce high-end fashion items using waste material from the textiles industry. She had got a good response from potential investors, but was keen to finish her MBA before committing to the project, even though she described her studies as 'a distraction'. She also noted that although MBA graduates are expected to join corporates, at least five or six fellow students on her course were interested in social enterprise instead.

Most respondents felt opportunities are gender neutral, certainly in cities and among better-educated people. It was also noted that government programmes encourage women in particular to go into social enterprise

RELEVANT RECOMMENDATIONS

Special programmes should target older youth in workplaces etc

Develop a road map for social enterprises

(See Recommendations section for more detail.)

8. COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Summary of research on key policies and programmes in India

The YLGCI study found those in the field consider communication to be a critical aspect of young engagement. Word of mouth sharing of experiences and ideas is considered especially important, and accordingly it is important to communicate in a dynamic way that encourages participation rather than simply sending out prescriptive messages about what the important issues are and what young people should do about them.

Social media such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter are of particular interest as they provide easy, cost-effective access to a large urban youth population in particular, and also offer a global reach. These media also offer opportunities for seeking views and fostering dialogue, though significant resources are needed to manage content. Blogs are another useful medium through which to engage on issues of concern, disseminate information and discuss possible action whether on a local, national or international scale. While mobile phones are increasing the reach of the internet in rural areas, however, it remains important in the Indian context to ensure a programme is not limited only to web platforms. The YLGCI study also found respondents value mass media including TV, radio and the press, which have a greater reach among those who are not already engaged in social issues.

Nevertheless, many organisations believe there is no substitute for direct engagement with young people. Getting together with peers to discuss social issues allows for an immediate exchange of views and ideas, allowing young people to clarify their own thoughts in the process, as well as taking inspiration from one another's experiences. Partnering with NGOs is a good way to facilitate such encounters, as they often have a presence and contacts in particular localities. Educational establishments, youth clubs anywhere else young people congregate are naturally also good places to focus such initiatives. Peer-led approaches are seen as particularly effective, as young people

often prefer to engage with people of their own age rather than relying on older authority figures. In terms of the content of communications, YLGCI respondents suggested sharing 'success stories' wherever possible. These are especially helpful if they involve people of a similar social background to the young people in the target group, as in that case such stories can both inspire and suggest practical ways forward.

Comparable issues in the UK

Social media are widely and heavily used by young people in Britain. Accordingly, they are often used by NGOs and other organisations seeking to engage youth, and are used extensively in the government and other programmes for young people.

Mass media is also important in the UK, with national broadcasters including the BBC enjoying almost universal reach; the situation is also simplified by the universal reach of the English language. Most newspapers now feature interactive blogs on their websites, with many younger contributors. Newspapers and TV stations also run occasional campaigns to engage the public – often young people in particular – on a variety of issues.

Summary of Youth Matters findings

Respondents were of the view that social media are more often used to mock politicians and spread rumours than to engage seriously with politics. But they suggested this is partly because the authorities have been known to crack down on those who make critical comments online, and dissident voices are sometimes accused of being traitors. Nonetheless, respondents also suggested that the situation is improving as more and more politicians are on Twitter and beginning to value social media as a free and open space for debate.

Summary of focus group and telephone discussions

Social media were seen as very important, with their role in the Arab Spring regularly mentioned. Some suggested the significance of social media should not be overestimated, however. Nearly all respondents used Facebook, but they also expressed doubts about its efficacy as a tool for

wider social engagement. As one of the Chennai group put it, 'When you go on Facebook, it's not to engage in politics. It's for finding out about others' lives'. The phenomenon of clicking 'Like' for a cause and then forgetting all about it ('slacktivism') was raised several times, while one respondent also mentioned the two Mumbai women arrested for Facebook comments after the death of Bal Thackeray. Several participants mentioned the danger that more political posts on social media can provoke hostility, as one's Facebook 'friends', for example, won't necessarily share one's political views.

It was also noted that social media reaches a limited demographic, and is far more available to urban than to rural young people. One participant in Kolkata even suggested this means social media is not 'valid' in India. Nevertheless, others in Delhi said more investment in mobile technology in rural areas could ameliorate this imbalance.

Examples of the successful use of social media

- In Delhi, a keen cyclist had used cycling interest groups on social media to build a 'cycle for climate change' event. Such targeted interventions are more effective than a scattergun approach to social media.
- Another respondent in Pune had first got involved in activism (for tiger conservation) through Orkut ('the Facebook of the day') and gone on to edit an online newsletter.

She described social media as 'a brilliant way to rope people in', but emphasised the importance of translating their involvement into real-work action.

For news, online sources are preferred over print media, with particular value placed on comments under articles as a source of new information as well as opinion. Nonetheless, coverage in the mainstream press and media continues to be highly valued as a source of publicity and prestige for social programmes.

Several initiatives from the mainstream media were mentioned in the discussions:

- The Times of India's 'I lead India'
- NDTV's Save the Tiger
- The Hindu's 'My Chennai, My Rights'
- CNN-IBN's citizen journalism initiative
- NDTV's 'My Vote Rocks' campaign

RELEVANT RECOMMENDATIONS

Provide better information about policies and programmes across various platforms

Form partnerships with established media with reach across India

Experiment with new platforms to encourage volunteering, especially online

(See Recommendations section for more detail.)

References

This report summarises existing research on key policies and programmes relating to youth engagement in India (primarily the study, Youth Leadership and Global Citizenship Initiatives), and highlights points of comparison with the UK. It also synthesises the results of Youth Matters, an online engagement campaign organised by the British Council India in partnership with Youth ki Awaaz, and a series of focus group discussions and telephone interviews convened by the Council itself. These comprised two focus groups with young people in Chennai, two groups in Delhi, one in Kolkata and a series of phone interviews with young people in Mumbai and west India.

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